

Book reviews

Sexually Transmitted Diseases. By C. B. S. Schofield, 1979. Pp. 250. Churchill Livingstone: Edinburgh (£3.25).

The author is certainly not letting the grass grow under his feet and is to be commended on producing a third edition of his popular paperback first published in 1972. The symbolic representations of men predominating over women on the new cover highlights his intention to focus attention on the possibility of the sexually transmitted diseases (STD) manifesting themselves at sites other than the genitals. Thus there are new sections on Australia antigen-positive hepatitis, cytomegalovirus, infectious mononucleosis, and the enteric diseases. The chapters on gonorrhoea have been updated as befits the most common of the venereal diseases still having the greatest research potential.

There are still the distinctive chapters on the medico-social background and management of STDs. Information on the tropical diseases affecting the genitals is also welcome, even to those of us working in the commercial centres of landlocked regions. Chlamydial infections are included where relevant, but I wonder whether the time has now come to devote more space to this important and expanding subject. The references have been revised and extended.

The new enlarged edition, which can still be slipped into the pocket, has improved

spacing and a more attractive format. What it lacks most of all are some pictures or illustrations of the many conditions described. Its remarkably low price should not, however, deter the enthusiast from investing in *Wisdom's Colour Atlas of Venereology* to complement this wide-ranging and informative textbook.

A. L. Hilton*

*Dr Hilton died recently

Handbook on Sexually Transmitted Diseases. By the National Health and Medicine Research Council, 1978. Pp. 64. Australian Government Publishing Service: Canberra (\$A 2.00).

This handbook was produced by the *ad hoc* committee on venereal diseases of the National Health and Medical Research Council in response to a need to give Australian doctors, students, nurses, and other health workers an understanding of sexually transmitted disease. It was not designed as a textbook but does list books for further reading. It, therefore, excludes many details and contentious topics; notwithstanding, it is an excellent, well-produced handbook, which is a pleasure to read.

Careful attention to page layout and sub-headings make for easy referral to any subject, and there is an adequate index (but why have 'introduction' included — look at the front of the book for that, not the index).

All normal sexually transmitted infections are included as well as a section on 'other conditions', which includes such important subjects as 'normal genital structures', 'injuries', and 'skin disease'. The section on Donovanosis is rather disappointing in view of the incidence of disease in nearby Papua New Guinea. Many would not agree that 'a patient can be reassured that a female partner that they may have infected (with non-specific urethritis) will not suffer serious consequences.' This statement spoils an otherwise excellent chapter on the pitfalls of NSU.

Treatment schedules are conveniently grouped in an appendix and are generally adequate. Oral penicillins are specifically stated to be not reliable for the treatment of syphilis, and several similar negative statements are made. It is deplorable that procaine penicillin treatment for gonorrhoea should be spread over two days.

Such a handbook as this would fulfil a need in the United Kingdom as well as in Australia.

P. D. Simmons